

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

115

One of the principal occupations of the students consists in copying the books of the preceptor, since it is impossible to buy books, and the only way to accumulate a library is to copy it off by hand. In order to get a greater variety of books students often travel from *canton* to *canton* through many tribes. 871 212

Some of the books are in Arabic and some in Berber, not necessarily of Rifian dialect. Many are in the dialect of the Sous. Most of the books deal with magic and religious problems, but a few of them deal with history and geography. There are also books written in a numerical code, called *el ughabari*, which the students use as a secret means of communication. There are many different kinds of *el ughabari*, and many different codes, but all are based on numbers. Another system is to use a set word for each letter in the alphabet, and to spell out the message, a word for a letter. This system is used in speech as well as in writing, and has the disadvantage of being very lengthy and tedious. It is called *er unsas*; students use it when they want to say something uncomplimentary about someone present. 871 202 198

Students travel from mosque to mosque in order to absorb the learning of different preceptors who have specialized in different subjects. To obtain what is considered a well-rounded education a student must thus fulfill a considerable itinerary. Some preceptors are popular and draw crowds of students from all over the Rif; others teach the local students only. 871 875

Wandering or visiting students are fed by the people of the *canton* in which the mosque is situated. Families send food every day to the mosque. Goats are often sacrificed in cantonal mosques containing saintly remains, and the students and their preceptor take half the meat, giving the warden the other half.

There is no fixed time for the completion of studies in the cantonal mosque. When a student is satisfied with his state of erudition, feels that his share of labor is needed by his family, or wishes to marry, he simply stops going to the mosque and spends his time farming instead. Most students stop when they get married; those who continue after marriage do so with the intention of adopting a professional career. Some prefer the indolent, wandering life of the student to the restrictions imposed upon them by marriage, and roam about, living off the land, until they are old. In most cases the latter type of student goes sooner or later to the Jebala and affiliates himself with some religious brotherhood.

Besides being fed by the *canton* in which they study, the students earn money by tailoring and embroidering jellabas, shirts, trousers, and other garments. Ex-students usually embroider their wives' garments for them. They also earn money by chanting from the Koran at funerals and weddings. They are immune from physical violence, and can pass from tribe to tribe with impunity, no matter what the state of affairs may be, except during those periods when the tribal council fails to meet and all law has gone from the land.

A student who aspires to become a *kadhi*, or "judge," must attend either the mosque of Sidi Bu Daud in Tamsaman, that of the Beni Mejrau in Beni Zerwal, the university at Tangier, or the Kairawiin university at Fez. At the Kairawiin the student enters the secular, not the religious, college. 874

Whichever of these institutions the student attends, he studies law and related subjects until he has qualified himself as a judge and has obtained a certificate to that effect from the head of the institution. Formerly very few Rifians studied in Fez, but in recent years the number has been increasing.

3. COUNCILS, WARFARE AND ALLIANCES

614
619
623
634
A) The Agraw:

The agraw is a meeting or convening of all the adult Rifian males in a clan or tribe who are capable of supporting their opinions by force of arms. It is an assembly of all men who carry rifles, and it has almost unlimited attributes, among which the major ones are:

a) Declaration of war and of all that this embodies (organization of attack and defense, organization of harka-s or war-parties, contingents which are levied up for distant expeditions, and establishment of agreements of friendship or alliance with neighboring tribes).

b) Guarding the security and honor of its component family and kin groups (making common cause with them, supporting them with force if necessary, and acting as mediators); thus, when the interests of any individual or of his kinsmen are harmed, and he is incapable of defending his rights, the councilmembers claim the resulting damages in his name, and, in order to obtain them, they either very soon have to take up arms, or wait and work out an alliance with other igraw, or convoke the agraw of the group one step up the ladder.

The agraw may be on a village (or hamlet), "fractional" (or clan), or tribal level, and the only difference between these three levels lies in the number of councillors who attend the meeting on each one....The agraw is convoked by mqaddimin or shiyukh¹; by word of mouth, by arqqas or messenger (gunshots by day or bonfires--thafgirth, pl. thifgirin--at night, in case of alarm, and in both instances by cries transmitted from hilltop to hilltop, from village to village, and from mountain to plain).